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ABSTRACT

Parents generally want their children to grow up to be responsible citizens and free thinking individuals who learn to feel, think, and act with respect for themselves and for other people. This booklet provides information about the values and skills that make up character and good citizenship and what parents can do to help their children develop strong character. The booklet suggests activities that parents and their school-aged children can do to put those values to work in their daily lives and tips for working with teachers and schools to ensure that they can act together to promote the basic values they want their children to learn and use. It also provides an extensive list of books and other resources with character-related themes that parents can read and discuss with their children to encourage character and citizenship development. The booklet is divided into eight sections: (1) "Introduction"; (2) "What Does Strong Character Mean?"; (3) "How Can We Help Children Learn about Character"; (4) "Activities"; (5) "Dealing with Media Pressures"; (6) "Working with Teachers and Schools to Build Character"; (7) "Resources"; and (8) "Bibliography" (n=16). (BT)

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Children's books and magazines are mentioned in this booklet as examples and are only a few of many appropriate children's books and periodicals. Other materials mentioned are provided as resources and examples for the reader's convenience. Listing of materials and resources in this book should not be construed or interpreted as an endorsement by the Department of any private organization or business listed herein.

Helping Your Child

Become a Responsible Citizen

With activities for elementary, middle and high school-aged children

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Intergovernmental and Interagency Affairs

Foreword

"Intelligence is not enough. Intelligence plus character, that is the goal of true education."

— Martin Luther King Jr.

As parents, we all want our children to grow up to be responsible citizens and good people. We want them to learn to feel, think and act with respect for themselves and for other people. We want them to pursue their own well-being, while also being considerate of the needs and feelings of others. We want them to recognize and honor the democratic principles upon which our country was founded. We want them, in short, to develop strong character.

The cornerstone of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* is academic achievement and professional success built upon a foundation of moral strength and civic virtue. As Secretary of Education Rod Paige has said, "We must not simply teach children how to count, we must teach them what counts." And the payoffs for encouraging our children's character development are enormous. Research has shown that children who grow up with strong, positive values are happier and do better in school. They are also better able to balance their personal wants and needs against those of others and to make positive contributions to society.

On the other hand, if children do not learn proper values and behavior when they are very young, problems can develop. These problems can mushroom with serious consequences as children grow older—dropping out of school, drug use, teenage pregnancy, violent crime—the list goes on.

The most important thing we can do for our children is to help them acquire values and skills that they can rely on throughout their lives. In doing so, they will have the best chance to lead good lives as individuals and as citizens of their communities and of America.

Contents

Introduction v

What Does 'Strong Character' Mean? 1
- Compassion 1
- Honesty and Fairness 3
- Self-discipline 5
- Good Judgement 7
- Respect for Others 9
- Self-respect 11
- Courage 13
- Responsibility 15
- Citizenship and Patriotism 16

How Can We Help Children Learn about Character? 18
- Set a Good Example 18
- Set High Standards and Clear Expectations 20
- Coach 21
- Use Literature 22

Activities 25
- Getting to Know Others—from Near and Far 26
- Gifts from the Heart 27
- Telling the Truth 28
- Think about It 30
- Keep Trying 31
- Making Decisions 32
- Magic Words, Caring Deeds 33
- There's a Monster in My Room! 34
- OOPS! 36
- Stand Up for Yourself 36
- Helping Out 38
- More Than Chores 40
- Our Heroes! 41
- How Can I Be of Service? 42
- Coping 43
- Are You My Friend? 45
- Listen to Your Feelings 46
- Share a Story 46

Dealing with Media Pressures 49

Working with Teachers and Schools to Build Character 51

Resources 53
- Books That Can Support Character Development 53
- Children's Magazines 70
- Booklists 71

Bibliography 73

Acknowledgments 75

Our Founding Fathers understood that our country would survive and flourish if our nation was committed to good character and an unyielding dedication to liberty and justice for all. Throughout our history, our most honorable heroes practiced the values of hard work and honesty, commitment to excellence and courage, and self-discipline and perseverance. Today, as we work to preserve peace and freedom throughout the world, we are guided by a national character that respects human dignity and values every life.

— President George W. Bush

Introduction

Just as children must be taught to tie their shoes, read and write, solve math problems, and understand science concepts and events in history, so must they be guided in developing the qualities of character that are valued by their families and by the communities in which they live. It is only through guidance and modeling by caring adults that children learn to be honest and thoughtful, to stand up for their principles, to care about others, to act responsibly and to make sound moral choices.

This booklet provides information about the values and skills that make up character and good citizenship and what you can do to help your child develop strong character. It suggests activities that you and your school-aged children can do to put those values to work in your daily lives and tips for working with teachers and schools to ensure that you act together to promote the basic values that you want your child to learn and use. Finally, the booklet provides an extensive list of books and other resources with character-related themes that you can read and discuss with your child to encourage character and citizenship development.

Be assured that the qualities of character discussed in this booklet are universally recognized by people of many religions and cultures, and the information contained in the booklet can be used by parents from many different backgrounds and with different beliefs.

What Does "Strong Character" Mean?

Character is a set of qualities, or values, that shape our thoughts, actions, reactions and feelings. People with strong character

- show compassion,
- are honest and fair,
- display self-discipline in setting and meeting goals,
- make good judgments,
- show respect to others,
- show courage in standing up for beliefs,
- have a strong sense of responsibility,
- are good citizens who are concerned for their community, and
- maintain self-respect.

Compassion

Compassion, or *empathy*, means identifying with and being concerned about other people's feelings and needs. It provides the emotional root for caring about other people. It allows us to be understanding and tolerant of different points of views and beliefs, it makes us aware of the suffering of others, and it allows us to empathize with them or to feel their suffering as our own. Compassion also allows us to feel joy and excitement—rather than anger and despair—at other people's successes and achievements.

Babies may begin to cry when they hear other sounds of crying, and coo and laugh when they hear others making happy sounds. By the age of three, many children will make an effort to hug or comfort another child or a parent who seems upset. As children grow, compassion can guide their actions and behaviors in positive ways. They understand that by doing something wrong, they cause others pain or unhappiness.

We can promote compassion by helping our children to think about how others feel. For example, if your child says or does something hurtful to another child, help him* to focus his attention on the feelings of his victim by saying, for example, "How do you think Zack feels? Would you like to feel like that?" Children develop compassion by practicing acts of caring and kindness towards others. As adults, we need to emphasize the importance of helping others, giving others the benefit of the doubt and being open to differences.

What You Can Do

- Talk about the point of view of others as you watch TV, read books or discuss other people with your child. For example, ask, "What do you think that character is feeling and thinking?"
- Show care toward others, such as doing errands for sick neighbors or opening doors for others.
- Give others the benefit of the doubt. If your child complains that a classmate deliberately pushed her down on the way to lunch, explain that sometimes when people are in a hurry, they don't watch where they're going—they don't mean to push or hurt anyone.

* Please note: In this booklet, we refer to a child as "him" in some places and "her" in others. We do this to make the booklet easier to read. Please understand, however, that every point that we make is the same for boys and girls.

- Be open to differences. If your child says "Our new neighbors dress funny," explain that people often wear clothes that reflect their cultures or native countries.

—Daddy, why is Grandma crying?
—She's very sad. One of her friends just died. Come sit with me. Do you remember how you felt when your gerbil, Whiskers, died?
—I felt sad and lonely.
—Well imagine how much worse Grandma must feel losing a friend. Maybe you can think of a way to help her.
—I could give her a hug...
—That's a great idea!

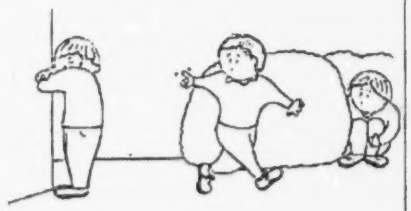
Honesty and Fairness

Simply put, *honesty* means being truthful with ourselves and with others. It means caring enough about others not to mislead them for personal benefit. It means facing up to our mistakes, even when we have to admit them to others or when they may get us into trouble.

Fairness means acting in a just way and making decisions, especially important ones, on the basis of evidence rather than prejudice. It means "playing by the rules" and standing up for the right of everyone to be treated equally and honestly.

To understand the importance of being honest and fair, children need to learn that living together in a family, community or even a nation depends on mutual trust. Without honesty and fairness, trusting each other becomes very difficult, and families—and societies—fall apart.

Words of caution: There is a big difference between being dishonest—lying or cheating—and "making things up," as children often do in fantasy play. If children are taught that not telling the truth is "a bad thing," some young children might assume that it is also a bad thing to pretend to be a princess or an astronaut. Although you should discourage your child from deliberately lying and cheating, you should also let him know that it is fine to role play and pretend.



What You Can Do

- Be a model of honest relations with others.
- Discuss with your child what honesty is and is not. Point out, for example, that being honest doesn't mean telling someone you think he looks ugly. Kindness goes along with honesty.

—Dad, Why can't I choose what video to watch? It is not fair that Ramon gets to pick?
—Yes, it is fair, because you got to pick the video we watched last night. Now it is Ramon's turn.

- Discuss fairness (chances are that your child will bring it up) in different situations. For example, how do we show fairness in our family? What does fairness mean to the community? What were standards of fairness in the past?
- Talk about how you try to be fair in your life and work. What issues of justice have you wrestled with? Your adolescent will be particularly interested in talking with you about these things.

—Mom, why did you tell the cashier that she'd given you too much change? It was her mistake, so why didn't you just keep it.
—Because the money wasn't mine, and it would have been dishonest for me to keep it.

Self-discipline

Self-discipline is the ability to set a realistic goal or make a plan—then stick with it. It is the ability to resist doing things that can hurt others or ourselves. It involves keeping promises and following through on commitments. It is the foundation of many other qualities of character.

Often self-discipline requires persistence and sticking to long-term commitments—putting off immediate pleasure for later fulfillment. It also includes dealing effectively with emotions, such as anger and envy, and developing patience.

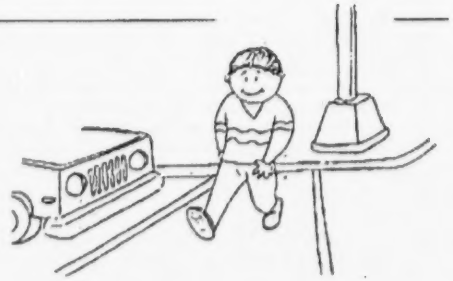
Learning self-discipline helps children regulate their behavior and gives them the willpower to make good decisions and choices. On the other hand, the failure to develop self-discipline leaves children wide open to destructive behavior. Without the ability to control or evaluate their impulses, they often dive headlong into harmful situations.

What You Can Do

- Talk with your child about setting reachable goals. For example, help him break big tasks into little tasks that can be accomplished one at a time. Have the child pick a task and set a deadline for completing it. When the deadline has passed, check together to see if the task was completed.
- Help your child build a sense of her competence. To do this, she needs experiences of success, no matter how small. This builds confidence and effort for the next time. Keep making the tasks just a little more challenging but doable.

—Who just called?
—It was Tyler, Dad. He wanted me to go with him to the video store to check out the new DVDs.
—What did you tell him?
—I said I couldn't, because you and I need to work on my science project for school.

Good Judgement



Children develop strong character by learning to think about and make sound judgments about what is right or wrong, good or bad. These are not always easy distinctions for adults to make, much less children.

For example, it can be difficult for a child to recognize the difference between acting bravely and acting recklessly. As parents, we can help by showing, through what we do as well as what we say, that it is important in such situations to think carefully and honestly about what should be done, carefully weighing how others will be affected by what we do.

Sometimes we get into trouble because we "just didn't think." We let our emotions lead us to actions that we regret later. Making good judgments requires skills in monitoring impulses, using reasoning to sort through feelings and facts, and thinking about the consequences of our actions.

Your child's ability to think and make sound judgments will improve as she matures. With age, however, it also may become easier for her to try to justify and make excuses for selfish or reckless behavior. However, if you have helped her develop strong habits of honesty, courage, responsibility and self-respect, your child will have the ability to see the flaws in her reasoning and be able to come to the right conclusion about what to do.

What You Can Do

- Teach your child to stop and think before acting on impulse.
- Teach your child to tell fact from feeling. Let him know that just because he feels strongly about something—such as hitting someone who made him angry— doesn't mean it's the right thing to do.

- Encourage your child to think about the consequences of her decisions. Tell her little stories about situations she might face and talk about actions she might take, who might be affected by her actions, what might happen because of her actions and what the best action might be.
- When your child has a problem with a rule, brainstorm together a list of possible reasons for the rule. This leads to greater understanding.
- Remind your child to pay attention to the rules or codes that apply in each situation. For example, the rules for behaving in church are different from those for a football game.

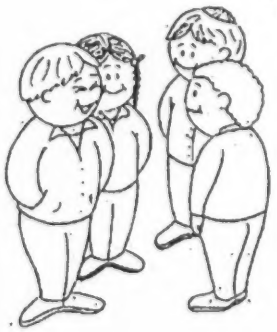
—I got really mad because John wouldn't talk to me.
—What were you doing at the time?
—We were in line for lunch.
—Well, what's the rule about waiting in line?
—You aren't supposed to talk.
—Then John was doing the right thing, wasn't he?

Respect for Others

Respect for others is based on self-respect and is summed up in the Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have others do unto you. It is the value that makes the world a more decent and civilized place.

People show respect in many ways. They speak and act civilly—avoiding insults, cruel remarks and rude or crude language. They are courteous and considerate of others, including family members and friends, and care about their rights, beliefs and well-being. They treat others fairly and as individuals, regardless of race, sex, age or ethnic group. They display tolerance for people who do not share their personal beliefs and likes—so long as those people do not harm others.

Research indicates that children learn to respect others when they are treated with respect themselves. Constant criticism of a child, negative comments about him and failure to praise his achievements can lead the child to be disrespectful to others. Treating children with respect pays large dividends both to families and to societies as a whole.



What You Can Do

- Practice respectful ways of communicating. Show your child how to talk to others with respect.
- Help your child to resolve conflicts nonviolently. When facing a conflict, encourage your child to do the following: (1) Find out what the conflict is. For example, if your child is angry because his little brother barges into his room without knocking, help him to explain the conflict by using an "I" statement, such as "I feel angry when you come into my room without knocking." (2) Next, suggest different ways he might resolve the conflict. He could say to his brother, "I know I can't always hear when I'm listening to music, so you knock really loud five times—if I don't answer, then open the door." Or, "If I don't answer your knock, slide a note under the door." Or, "Let's use our walkie talkies." (3) Then have your child agree on one of the choices. (4) Finally, have him make a plan to check whether the solution is working.
- Teach your child to respect the valued traditions of your heritage. Talk about family customs for showing respect, for honoring elders and for helping the community. Encourage her to do these things.

—Kaylee, is that my new sweater you're wearing.
—Yeah, Mom. What's wrong? Doesn't it look OK with this skirt?
—How it looks on you isn't the point. You didn't ask me if you could borrow that sweater, did you?
—No, Mom. I guess I thought you wouldn't mind.
—Well, I do mind that you didn't ask first. That's not very respectful, is it?

Self-respect

Self-respect means taking satisfaction in appropriate behavior and hard-won accomplishments. People with self-respect also respect others. They do not need to disparage others or build themselves up by bragging or exaggerating their abilities or talents. They do not need lots of money or power to feel good about themselves.

People who respect themselves view selfishness, loss of self-discipline, recklessness, cowardice and dishonesty as wrong and unworthy of them. They have inner strength and are unwilling to let others use or manipulate them. They know that showing patience or tolerance does not mean allowing others to mistreat them.

People with self-respect do not crumble when they fail. They accept mistakes as a part of life. As we help our children set high standards for themselves, we also need to let them know that failure is no embarrassment when they have done their best.

Teaching children self-respect, however, does not mean complimenting everything they do. They also need honest criticism from time to time. When we do criticize, we should focus on things they have done, not on them personally.

What You Can Do

- Encourage your child to build a positive identity that focuses on her integrity and talents.
- Emphasize that character is built upon the decisions and actions a person takes each day.
- Work with your child to help him reach his full potential by encouraging him to develop his talents, set reachable goals and honor himself as a unique person.
- Teach your child how to choose good values. Help her reason about what are worthy goals and what are proper means to reach those goals.

—Why so down, Charlie?
—We lost the game.
—Did you play a good game?
—Yeah, we played our hardest.
—There's no shame in losing a game when you've played your best and the other team just played better. Hold your head high, son!

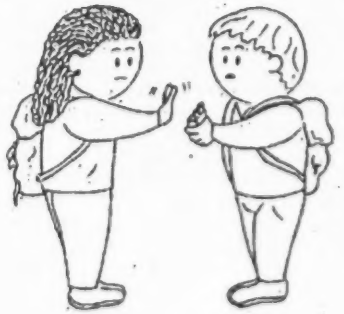
Courage

Courage is the ability to overcome fear in order to do what is right, even if it is difficult or risky. Courage can mean facing physical dangers, but it also can mean standing up for beliefs and making hard decisions on the basis of evidence rather than on what is the easy or popular thing to do. It means being neither reckless nor cowardly but facing up to our duties and responsibilities.

Courage, however, does not mean never being afraid; and children should be told that there are times when it is all right to be frightened and to run away from danger. But they also need to learn how to face and overcome some fears, such as a fear of the dark.

What You Can Do

- Coach your child on how to be brave. Praise him when he acts courageously (but never ridicule him for any reason—ridicule can have long-lasting effects on a child's self-confidence).
- Discuss with your child how to say no. Sometimes children don't know how to say no to peers who ask them to do dangerous or risky things. After identifying ways that she might be tempted, teach your child a three-step process for self-protection:
  1. Apply the "trouble" rule: Will this action break a law or rule?
  2. Make a good decision—think carefully about the risks or possible consequences.
  3. Act fast to avoid trouble, using options such as the following:
     - —Say no!
     - —Leave.
     - —Make a joke
     - —Suggest something better to do.
     - —Make an excuse such as, "My dad will get really mad."
     - —Act shocked.



—Mom, some of the kids were smoking after school today. One of them offered me a cigarette.
—What did you do?
—I said no.
—Then what happened.
—Everybody laughed at me and called me a baby.
—So then what did you do?
—I just walked away.
—Good for you! That took a lot of courage, and I'm proud of you.

Responsibility

Being *responsible* means being dependable, keeping promises and honoring our commitments. It is accepting the consequences for what we say and do. It also means developing our potential.

People who are responsible don't make excuses for their actions or blame others when things go wrong. They think things through and use good judgment before they take action. They behave in ways that encourage others to trust them.

People who are responsible take charge of their lives. They make plans and set goals for nurturing their talents and skills. They are resilient in finding ways to overcome adversity. They make decisions, taking into account obligations to family and community.

Children need to learn that being part of a family and a community involves accepting responsibilities. When each of us acts responsibly, our families and communities will be stronger.

—I'm going to Matties house, Dad.
—Have you walked the dog?
—No. I'll do that when I get back.
—Casey, walking the dog is your responsibility. In this house meeting our responsibilities comes first. Walk the dog, and then you can go to Matties.

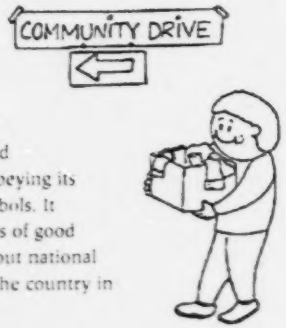
What You Can Do

- Make agreements with your child and expect him to follow through.
- When things go wrong, help your child take responsibility for her part and make a plan to do things differently next time.
- Encourage your child to find out more about the world and how his actions may affect others far away.

Citizenship and Patriotism

Citizenship requires doing our share for our community and our country. Being a good citizen means caring about the good of society and participating actively to make things better.

Research reveals that participating in community service programs and learning about the importance and value of serving others can be a powerful influence on positive character development.



Patriotism is an important part of good citizenship. Patriotism is love of and loyalty to our country. It involves honoring the democratic ideals on which the country is based and expecting elected officials to do the same, respecting and obeying its laws and honoring its flag and other symbols. It also involves accepting the responsibilities of good citizenship, such as keeping informed about national issues, voting, volunteering and serving the country in times of war.

What You Can Do

- Take your child with you when you vote. Talk to him about the candidates, the offices they aspire to hold and their positions on key issues.
- Participate in community-building activities, such as cleaning up parks and assisting with school activities.
- Discuss citizenship with your child and find examples of what good citizens have done for their communities.

—Mom, where are you going?
—I'm going to a meeting. People who live on this block are getting together to plan how we can clean up that empty lot down the street and turn it into a playground.
—That would be great, Mom! But I thought Aunt Jen was coming over tonight.
—She's coming over tomorrow night instead. She understands it's important that I be at tonight's meeting. A playground down the street is just what our community and our family need, and I want to help make it happen.

How Can We Help Children Learn about Character?

Children learn about strong character when parents and other adults in their daily lives

- set a good example through their own behavior and actions,
- set and communicate high standards and clear expectations,
- coach them on how to be responsible and kind, and
- use literature to reinforce the values of strong character.

Set a Good Example

We are always teaching our children something by our words and our actions. They learn from seeing. They learn from hearing and from *overhearing*. They learn from us, from each other, from other adults in the community and by themselves.

Children share the values of their parents about the most important things in life. Our priorities and principles and our examples of good behavior can teach our children to take the high road when other roads look tempting.

Remember that children do not learn the values that make up strong character simply by being *told* about them. They learn by seeing the people around them *act* on and *uphold* those values in their daily lives. In our daily lives, we can show our children that we respect others. We can show them our compassion and concern when others are suffering, and our own self-discipline, courage and honesty as we make difficult decisions. How we conduct our everyday activities can show our children that we always try to do our best to serve our families, communities and country.

The way that we view money and material goods also can mold our children's character. If we see our self-worth and the worth of others in terms of cars, homes, furniture, nice clothes and other possessions, our children are likely to develop these attitudes as well. Of course, it is important to meet our children's *needs*, but it is also important to help them understand the difference between their *needs* and their *wants*. The expensive jacket that your child has to have may be OK—if you can afford it.

Finally, we need to be consistent in upholding the values we want our children to respect and not present them with conflicting values. We may tell our children that cheating is wrong, for example, yet brag to a neighbor about avoiding paying taxes. We may say that rudeness to others is unacceptable, yet laugh when we see that behavior on a favorite TV show.

—Daddy, why are you leaving that note on the garbage can?
—There's broken glass inside, Matthew, and I don't want the garbage collectors to get hurt. I'm warning them about the glass.
—Are they your friends?
—No. I don't know them, but I still don't want them to get hurt.

Set High Standards and Clear Expectations

Some parents set low standards for their children, or do not hold their children to the standards they set. Parents may do this because they think that expecting too much of a child will harm his self-confidence. However, research shows that the opposite is true. A child builds self-confidence by trying (with guidance) to meet high standards, even when he has to struggle to do so.

Parents do not always make their standards for behavior clear to their children. It is not enough to mention your expectations once or twice. Remember that children grow and change so fast that they can easily misunderstand or forget what you have told them. Their understanding of the world is developing almost constantly and their "new" minds need to be reminded of your expectations. Because of this, you need to repeat your guidelines often and to do so in a way that makes sense as your child changes and develops.

—Dad, nobody's going to see inside the model's wing. Why do you work so hard with all those little pieces?
—Because that's the right way to build the plane, Martha. It makes the wing strong when the plane flies, and that's more important than what people see. I want to make the best plane I can. Do you want to help?

Words of caution: Your expectations must be appropriate for your child's age and stages of mental, emotional, social and physical development. For example, it's not appropriate to tell an infant not to cry and expect him to obey. Likewise, it's not appropriate to expect a 3-year-old to sit still for hours or for a 13-year-old not to worry about how she looks. Pay attention to what your child can do, start there and help her learn skills to move forward. Be gentle but firm in your expectations.

Coach

Remember how you learned to drive or cook? You practiced while someone coached you, reminding you what to do until you were able to coach yourself and then, eventually, do it automatically. Children learn values much the same way. They practice different kinds of behavior, while, you, as coach, help focus their attention on what is important and on fine-tuning important skills. You support them with your praise, encouragement and gentle reminders.

If you don't coach your child, she will find her coaches elsewhere and be guided by the values of the media, her peers and anyone else who captures her interest. So, step up to the plate, don't be afraid and help your child learn how to be a good person, step by step.

—Paul, have you written a thank-you note to your aunt and uncle for the birthday present they sent?
—No, but I told them that I liked it when they gave it to me.
—Well, that's a start, but they were nice enough to take the time to buy you a gift, so you need to show them that you appreciate it. Here, you sit with me and write your note to them while I write one to Ms. Miller—remember how she stayed to help me clean up after your birthday party?

Use Literature

Literature can be a very powerful teaching tool. In fact, people in stories, poems and plays can influence children almost as much as the real people who read with them. Therefore, reading to and with children, encouraging older children to read on their own and talking with children about the books they read are important ways to help children learn about and develop the values of strong character and good citizenship.

Asking Questions to Guide Discussions

Use questions such as the following to help your child think about the values of stories:

Motivation

How did the people in the story act?
Did they have good or bad motives?
Who were the heroes? Why were they heroes? Were there villains? Why were they villains?

Judgment

Did the people make good decisions? Why or why not?

Action

How did the people carry out their decisions? What kinds of steps did they take? Were there obstacles? How did they respond to the obstacles?

Sensitivity

Did the people think about the welfare of others?
Did the story have a good or bad ending? For whom was it good? For whom was it bad?
How could the story have turned out better for everyone?

Choosing Books

Choosing which books to use for character development can take some time and effort. Many good selections are available, including fiction and nonfiction books and books of poems, folk tales, fables and plays. There are excellent modern stories, as well as timeless classics. There is also a growing number of books that allow children to explore values across various cultures and countries. For lists of books to read to and with your child, see Books That Can Support Character Development on page 53 of this booklet. For more titles or additional help in choosing books, talk with your local or school librarian.

Words of caution: Although the moral theme of a story, nonfiction book, play or poem may be very clear to us, it is not always so to children. Always talk with your child about what she is reading to see how well she understands its theme or message. Be patient and listen carefully to your child's ideas. If her ideas are too far off the mark, talk with her about how she arrived at them—perhaps she misunderstood a word or is missing some important piece of information. Reread parts of the story with her and talk about the message.

(For more information about reading aloud with your children, see *Helping Your Child Become a Reader*, available online from the U.S. Department of Education at www.ed.gov/pubs/parents/hyc.html.)

—What did you think about the ant letting the grasshopper come stay with him over the winter?
—Well, it was nice of him. He was kind, and it was good that he wanted to help the grasshopper.
—But what about the grasshopper? Shouldn't he have prepared for the winter, as the ant did?
—Sure, but sometimes we don't do things that we should. I'll bet he learned a lesson, though. I'll bet he gets ready for next winter.

Activities

As parents, we may need to set aside particular times or create special activities to teach our children certain things. But this isn't true when it comes to helping them learn about character. Everyday life is filled with opportunities for helping our children learn about the values we prize and want to encourage.

Rather than "things to do" with your child for half an hour once a week, most of the following activities are more like rules-of-thumb or ideas to build into your daily lives. Most illustrate several qualities of character and show that one quality often grows from another.

The activities can be adapted for children from early childhood through adolescence, and most contain specific suggestions for children of different ages and stages of development. You, as your child's first and most important teacher, are the best judge of which activities are most appropriate to use based on the emotional and social development of your child.

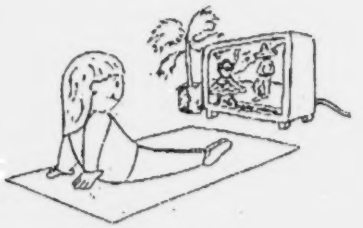
As you choose the activities to use with your child, remember this thought: Teaching our children about character doesn't mean that we can't laugh or that we have to be s[illegible]n. Our children should see that we can be serious about our values and principles and still play and have fun. In fact, you can teach a lot through play. And you can make games out of learning particular skills. We hope that you and your child enjoy these activities and that they inspire you to think of additional activities of your own.

Getting to Know Others—from Near and Far

Children need to be shown and taught that other people have feelings, beliefs and hopes, just as they do. Actually, we can learn a great deal from others, both in our families and neighborhoods and from other cultures, societies, religions and countries.

What to Do

- Show your child by your actions that you are interested in learning about and from other people. Let her know that you care about family by telling her interesting things about relatives, such as their hobbies or jobs. Let her see you being a friend to neighbors, store clerks, community workers and others. Let her see you reading books or watching TV shows and videos about people from other cultures, religions or countries. Talk with her about the interesting things you've learned from your reading and viewing. Invite people from other cultures or countries to your home.



Although we should teach our children to be tolerant and to behave respectfully toward other people, we should also make it clear that some people behave in ways that are harmful and that such behavior should not be tolerated.

- Visit the library with your child, and ask the librarian to help you choose books, videos, magazines and other materials that will help him learn about many different countries and people. Listen attentively when your child wants to tell you about things she has discovered about the geography, history, religion, music or art from other cultures and countries.

Gifts from the Heart

A gift that shows effort and attention can mean more than a gift from the store.

What to Do

- For the birthday or other special occasion of a relative or friend, encourage your child to make a gift instead of buying one. Help her decide what to give by asking her to think about the special talents she has. If she likes to sing or act, she might like to perform a special song or write and act out a skit or play. A young child might pick some flowers from the yard and take them to a neighbor.

Children may have heard the saying that it is better to give than to receive, but it will mean little to them if they do not think about what they can give others to show that they care.

An older child might do chores for mom, dad or a neighbor. She might, for example, wash the dishes for a week, clean the hall closet, babysit or run errands.

- If the gift is an activity or chore, have your child make a card and write a note, telling what the gift will be.
- Teach your child to think of others by encouraging her to choose some of her toys or good clothing that she's outgrown to give to community drives for homeless or needy children. Encourage your older child to consider giving the gift of his time as a volunteer for various community charitable efforts.

Telling the Truth

Benefiting from manipulating or lying to others is dishonest and can destroy trust.

What to Do

- Tell or read to your child the fable "The Boy Who Cried Wolf." Point out that when the boy yells "wolf," he is lying as a way to get attention. Make sure your child understands that the boy paid for his lies: He had alarmed the villagers so many times, nobody came to his rescue when a real wolf showed up!

- Ask your child if anyone has misled her with a lie. How did that make her feel? What did she do? Does she still like and trust the person who told the lie?
- If you catch your child telling a lie, let him know that you do not approve and assign him some consequence—no watching of a favorite TV show, for example. But also ask him why he lied to you and reinforce the idea that he can always tell you the truth—regardless of how unpleasant it might be.
- You especially need to model honesty with your older child. Keep talking with her, being honest and expecting honesty in return. Adolescence is a time when children are faced with more temptations and often less supervision. They need you as a positive role model.

Parents should be careful to follow through on things they say to their children. Commitments and promises that may seem minor to a parent can be very important to a child. If parents cannot follow through, they need to explain why they cannot meet the commitment.

Think about It

Is honesty always the best policy? Older children face many occasions that test the principle "honesty is the best policy." Your child may ask you, for example, "But do I have to tell Jesse the truth when she asks me if I like her new haircut? If I say yes, that's a lie. But if I say no, I'll hurt her feelings!" In addition, children often see and read about people who have become very successful and wealthy by being dishonest.

What to Do

- Ask your child to think of an answer she might say to her friend Jesse that would be honest and yet not hurt her feelings. Is there something about Jesse's haircut that she does like?
- Choose examples of sports figures, business leaders entertainers or politicians from the news who have been caught in dishonest acts and talk with your child about the consequences of those acts. Did "crime" really pay for them? Have their families benefited or suffered? How are they viewed by other people once their dishonesty is revealed?
- Have your child find books in which characters struggle with being honest. Read and talk about the books with your child. (Also see Resources on page 53 of this booklet for suggested books about honesty.)

To learn the importance of honesty, children need to see that dishonest behavior can both hurt their reputations and cause others around them unhappiness.

Keep Trying

Being a person of good character often requires having patience and sticking to something.

What to Do

- Let your child see you practice patience when doing a new or difficult task or when facing life's everyday frustrations, such as heavy traffic.
- Arrange to use a timer as you and your child work at a difficult task. For young children, start with one minute and build from there. This will build perseverance.
- Help your children understand that work comes before pleasure in simple everyday ways, such as homework before TV or chores before play.
- Make a game out of doing hard tasks. How many pieces of spilled popcorn can we pick up? Who can break the record for washing the most windows (washing them well, of course)?

Children need to learn that they sometimes have to be willing to work hard and wait for good things to come to them.

Making Decisions

There is a lot to think about in making good decisions.

What to Do

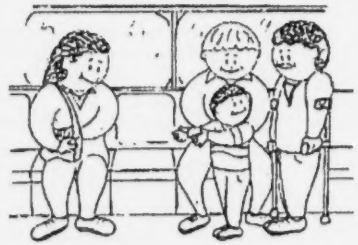
- Think out loud when you are making a difficult decision, so that your child can hear how you do it.
- Regularly take time to make a family decision with your child so that she can practice with you. Help her learn to think about the pros and cons, the effects of the decision on others and how to meet her obligations as a family member and citizen.
- Talk with your child about decisions made by characters on TV or in stories. Ask him to decide whether the characters thought about everything they should have, whether the decision was the best decision and what he would have done if he were the character.
- Let your preschool child choose what to wear, even if it means her clothes don't always match. This will make her feel empowered and help build self-confidence.

Children learn to exercise good judgment by having many opportunities to make decisions on their own.

Magic Words, Caring Deeds

Good manners are a part of showing respect for others. Using games to reinforce manners provides children with the practice they need to learn manners without embarrassing themselves—or us.

What to Do



- Let your child know that respect for others can begin with something as basic as showing good manners, like
  - —shaking hands in greeting;
  - —looking someone in the eye while talking;
  - —saying "please," "thank you," "excuse me," and "I'm sorry";
  - —opening doors for others;
  - —using expressions such as "yes, sir" and "no, ma'am" when speaking to older people; and
  - —giving up a seat on a bus or subway to an older person or a person with a disability.
- At lunch or dinner time, have family members pretend to be eating in a restaurant. Ask your child how he should talk to you and to others at the table. What should he say when "the waiter" brings his food? How should he eat the food? What should he say if he wants to leave the table?
- Line up several chairs and have your child and other family members pretend to be on a bus. Ask your child to show you what she should say and do if the bus stops suddenly and she bumps into someone. How should she carry a large package on the bus so that it doesn't harm or bother others? What should she do if she is sitting on a bus and there are no vacant seats when an older person gets on?

- When your child mentions something nice that someone did for him, encourage him to write a thank-you note. Explain that the note doesn't have to have a lot of words. For younger children, it also can have drawings. After he writes the note, help your child to go over it and correct spelling and punctuation. Explain that taking the time to check and correct what we've written shows respect for the person getting the note.
- Let your child see you writing short notes to others. You might write a note to the mail carrier to thank her for helping you with a large package, to a neighbor to wish her well on a job interview or to a relative to congratulate him for winning an award.

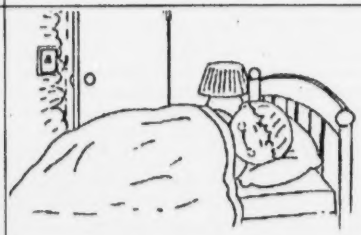
> From an early age, children need to see parents and other adults practicing the manners that they expect children to use.

There's a Monster in My Room!

Sometimes children develop fears that may seem silly or unreasonable. Nonetheless, the fears are real for them, and they need to find ways to overcome them.

What to Do

- Listen carefully when your child tells you that he is afraid of something—a monster in his room or a strange sound—even if his fear sounds silly to you. Try to understand what is causing the fear. Did he see an unfamiliar shape under his bed or in his closet? Did the sound he heard remind him of the sounds made by a ghost or



witch in a TV show or video he's seen? Helping your child overcome these fears will help him develop courage and self-confidence.

- With your child, come up with a plan for facing the fear. Go over the plan together. Let your child take the step that confronts the fear, although it may be helpful for you to be there. For example, go with him to look under his bed or in his closet to see exactly what he saw. Sit with him and listen closely to the wind. Explain that the wind sometimes makes scary sounds but is harmless.
- Don't let your young child watch scary movies or play violent video games. Research shows that the fear children experienced as they watched a scary movie can last for years, affecting their sleep and other behaviors. Children of different ages find different kinds of movies scary. For example, scary images, such as spooky creatures, frighten 3–8 year olds. Realistic violence, such as things that could actually happen, frightens 9–13 year olds.
- Older children can be afraid of their peers' judgments. Help your child develop a sense of independence from what peers may think and what the media promotes. Support your child in adopting his own style and his own ideas.

Children can acquire courage to handle real dangers if they have experience in facing their unreasonable fears. In addition, if we take seriously what are real fears to them, they will trust us and feel safe telling us other thoughts and feelings.

OOPS!

We don't always act the way we should in front of our children.

What to Do

- If you do something that sets a bad example of behavior, try to be honest with yourself and your child about what you've done. Sometimes we need to think a little about our behavior to realize that we've said or done something inappropriate.
- If your child has observed your behavior, it's especially important for you to be honest about it. A simple statement such as, "I'm sorry, that was a bad thing for me to do," is usually appropriate. You don't need to go into great detail about why you did what you did.
- If you have treated someone badly, let your child see you follow up with an apology and, if possible, with making up for what you have done.

How children see us handle our mistakes and slips in behavior can have a powerful impact on their behavior and character development.

Stand Up for Yourself

A part of self-respect is not tolerating mistreatment by others.

What to Do

- Listen to your child as she talks about school, playing with others and spending time with the babysitter, a relative or a neighbor. Find out how others treat her. By listening calmly and with interest, you will encourage her to trust you and come to you if she has a problem.

- When you face a situation in which you need to stand up for yourself, let your child see you do it with courtesy and good judgment. When someone cuts in front of you in line or charges you too much, think about your own response. Talk with your child about it—whether you did well or whether you could have done better.
- Help your child learn how to deal with being teased. It's important because children who are easily upset by teasing may appear weak and make themselves easy targets for bullies. In her book *Parents Do Make a Difference: How to Raise Kids with Solid Character, Strong Minds, and Caring Hearts,* Michele Borba offers some ideas. After you've listened carefully to your child's story, help her find a "bully-proofing strategy" with which she is comfortable. Keep in mind that what works for one child may not work for another and what works in one situation may not work in another. Some strategies that your child may find helpful include:
  - —Questioning the teaser with something like "Why would you say that?"
  - —Responding to the teaser firmly with "I want" statements, such as, "I want you to stop teasing me."
  - —Agreeing with the teaser. For example, respond to the tease, "You're dumb!" with "Yeah, but I'm good at it!"
  - —Responding with humor. Say something as simple as "So?" or "Thanks for telling me."
  - —Ignoring the teasing. Learn to walk away without even a look at the teaser.

Learning appropriate ways to deal with the unpleasant behavior of others is an important, if sometimes difficult, part of growing up. To build self-respect, children need to learn how to deal with problems they may have with others and how to recognize when they should ask for help.

Help your child rehearse these strategies. Stress the importance of staying calm, speaking firmly and looking the teaser in the eye, and not teasing back.

- Explain to your child that in some situations the best way he can stand up for himself is to ask an adult he trusts for help. Let him know that it's very important to ask for help
  - —if he's being bullied or feels threatened; or
  - —if he's mistreated by an adult.

  Also let him know you will intervene if he's seriously threatened by another child. And, if he has a problem with an adult, take action quickly to get your child out of harm's way. Report to proper authorities anyone who tries to harm your child.

Helping Out

Children need to learn that as they get older and can contribute more, additional responsibilities will be placed on them.

What to Do

- As your child matures, consider responsibilities that she can take on to contribute to the family and household. Discuss the new duties with her, but avoid describing them in ways that make them seem like punishment. Instead, hint that she has been given the new responsibilities because they

require skills or abilities that she now has or that they are the kinds of things that "big kids" or grown-ups are expected to do.

- With your younger child, you may want to do the new chores together for awhile. As you do so, talk with him and make the chore fun. Do not, however, do all of the work yourself!
- If possible, give your child new chores that will stretch her abilities and encourage satisfaction in good work. If your young child has been responsible for picking up her own clothes and putting them in the laundry basket, let her begin to sort the clothes in the basket by color. If your older child has been responsible for helping prepare dinner, let him plan and prepare family meals one night a week on his own. Praise good efforts.
- Talk with your child about the importance of doing the new chore correctly. What happens if you put red socks in the pile of whites for the laundry? What happens if dinner is late?
- Finally, let your child know that the new chores are not just suggestions; they are responsibilities. Make it clear that failure to meet the responsibilities will result in consequences—a loss of allowance, TV or computer privileges; no talking to friends on the phone; no leaving the house; no use of the family car; and so forth.

Doing household chores is a useful way for children to learn persistence and to learn that when we live up to our responsibilities, we show others that they can trust and rely on us.

More Than Chores

Explain to your child that doing chores is only one kind of responsibility. Being responsible also means answering for actions and words, being dependable and trustworthy, and using good judgment. Let your child know that showing these qualities is a good sign he is growing up and can be trusted with more responsibilities.

What to Do

- Choose a TV show to watch with your child. After the show, talk with her about what you saw. Point out specific things characters in the show did and talk about whether they were being responsible. If so, why? Ask your child whether a certain character should have done something differently.
- Pay attention to what your child says about decisions that involve doing the right thing. Make sure to correct statements such as, "It's OK. Everybody does it." Or, "It's not a problem, because no one saw me do it."
- When you see your child act responsibly, let her know. Tell her that you appreciate her behavior and that you are proud when she acts responsibly.

Some parents reward their children for acting responsibly by giving them rewards, such as stickers, extra TV time or even money. Research indicates that this may not be a good idea. Children need to learn that acting responsibly is its own reward. It is the expected standard for behavior.

Our Heroes!

Heroes are everywhere, and sharing stories about them can help children understand what qualities it takes to be a hero and what heroism really means.

What You Need

Family photographs; newspaper pictures of local people who have been recognized for community service, bravery or selfless acts; pictures from books or the Internet of people in history or current events whom we admire.

What to Do

- Talk with your child about what it means to be a hero. Ask him what he thinks a hero is and what qualities a hero has to have. Ask him who his heroes are and why.
- Select a photo of someone in your family who has an admirable quality or who performed a courageous act. You might choose a grandparent who left everything behind to immigrate to the United States or your mother who sacrificed so that you could have a good education or your father who fought in a war. Sit with your child and tell him about the relative's life. Talk with him about the qualities of character that the relative showed—courage, self-discipline, responsibility, citizenship, and so forth.
- Show your child newspaper pictures of local people who have performed acts of courage or service to the community. Talk with your child about what the people did and why they are considered "heroes."

- Show your child pictures of figures, living and dead, who have been called heroes. Choose people whom you admire and feel comfortable talking about with your child. In addition to well-known individuals, you might choose groups of people, such as the firefighters and police officers who sacrificed their lives at the World Trade Center in September 2001.

> By the stories we tell about the people we admire, we can inspire children and remind them of the qualities of character that we think are important.

How Can I Be of Service?

From an early age, children benefit from giving their time and efforts to help others.

What to Do

- Talk with your child about the importance of charitable work and serving others. Point out that such work is an important part of living in a civil and democratic society.
- Help your child think about age-appropriate things that she can do to serve the community. For example, your young child might help you sort items for recycling or give money from her piggy bank to a charitable group. An older child might participate in walks for charity, volunteer at animal shelters or visit residents of a local nursing home.

- Find information about community service organizations and share it with your child. You can begin by going to the Web site for the newly created Freedom Corps—www.usafreedomcorps.gov/—and looking for possibilities for volunteering and community service. You might also download or order *Students in Service to America: A Guidebook for Engaging America's Students in a Lifelong Habit of Service* at www.studentsinservicetoamerica.org/; or call toll-free 1-866-245-7378, ext. 272, to order. A nominal fee may be charged for reproduction and distribution of this product.

Research has found that children's participation in community service programs, *especially when combined with reflection* about the importance of serving others, can make important contributions to their character development.

Coping

Everyone faces hardships at some point in life. Children need to learn skills and qualities that can help them survive difficult situations.

What to Do

- Talk with your child about *resilience*, or the ability to succeed despite hardship or tragedy. Talk about how people cope with situations such as family breakups, health problems or community disturbances.

- Explain to your child that resilient people have certain things in common and these qualities are real assets for any person to have. Researchers have identified many of them, and below is a short inventory of such assets. Have your child rate herself on each one and discuss the results with her.

Personal qualities

—The ability to make a plan and carry it out
—A positive view of herself
—Confidence in her abilities
—A belief in her strengths
—The ability to communicate well with others (family, friends, and strangers)
—The ability to solve problems
—The ability to manage anger
—The ability to manage impulses

Relationships with adults that create love and trust, provide good role models and offer encouragement and reassurance help bolster children's resilience.

Social qualities

—Having a caring relationship with at least one adult who encourages and supports her
—Knowing that someone loves her
—Having an adult role model

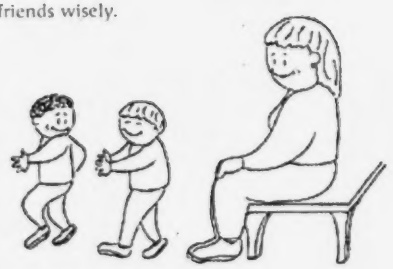
Or, you may want to review with your child the more comprehensive "Forty Developmental Assets," prepared by the Search Institute (check www.search-institute.org/assets/).

- Help your child make a plan to develop one or more of his assets.

Are You My Friend?

Children need to learn to choose their friends wisely.

What to Do



- Talk to your child about what she thinks a friend is. What qualities should a good friend have? In addition to being fun, is a friend honest, dependable and compassionate?
- Talk to your child about how to tell when someone is not a good friend. For example, does the person tell lies or cheat? Say things to hurt the feelings of others? Pick on children who are smaller or not as strong?
- Get to know your child's friends. Invite them to your home or take them along on a trip to the park or bowling alley. Observe their behavior and listen to what they say to each other. It is very important for you to know with whom your child is spending his time. Sometimes a child will select friends who are inappropriate. Often, after these friends spend time with the family, the child independently realizes that they don't fit in.

Children need guidance in choosing friends who care about others and who act responsibly.

Listen to Your Feelings

Children need to learn to notice their feelings and take them into account as they make decisions.

- Help your child learn to identify his feelings. Talk out loud about how you are feeling. Ask him how he is feeling.
- When reading a story or watching a TV show with your child, discuss the feelings of the characters. What might they be feeling and why?
- Help your child realize that sometimes the way we think about things affects the way we feel. If something is bothering your child, help him examine his thoughts and change them so that he feels better. For example, your teenager may worry about how he's ever going to hold down a job and support himself. You could ask him why he's so worried about the future and help him get his mind on doing the best he can in the "here and now."

Our feelings often provide helpful warnings about what are good and bad things to do and about whom we can trust.

Share a Story

Reading with children and encouraging them to read widely on their own can reinforce what they are learning about the qualities of strong character.

What to Do

- Find books that offer examples of important qualities of character. (See the lists at the end of this booklet.) Set aside time to read the books with your child or, for an older child, to talk about the book after he has read it on his own. Talk with him about the behavior of different characters in the story. Ask him how some of the behavior might apply to his own life. Encourage your older child to find and read other stories and books about people with strong character qualities.
- When reading stories to children, ask them to tell you which characters demonstrated character traits you think are important. For example, ask who was caring in the story? Who demonstrated honesty? Who demonstrated courage? Many times both the hero and the villain of a story demonstrate the same character traits (e.g., courage, perseverance, responsibility). Ask your child what is different about the hero and the villain? What made the hero a hero and the villain a villain?

- Set aside regular, quiet time for family reading. Some families even enjoy reading aloud to each other, with each family member choosing a book, story, poem or article to read to the others.
- Make sure your home has lots of reading materials that are appropriate for your child. Reading materials don't have to be new or expensive. You often can find good books and magazines for your child at yard or library sales. Ask family members and friends to consider giving your child books and magazine subscriptions as gifts for birthdays or other special occasions. (See the list of children's magazines at the end of this booklet.)
- Encourage your child to use the library. Take your child to the local library and help him get his own library card. Ask the librarian to help him locate different areas in the library and to use the library catalog to find materials in which he is interested.
- While you are at the library with your child, check out some books for yourself. Be a positive role model for reading. Let your child see you reading.
- Turn off the TV and limit the amount of time that your child spends playing computer games!

Simply reading a book to a child or having him read a book on his own will not cause him to change his behavior or suddenly adopt strong values. Parents should help children to think about what they read, reflect on it and talk about how it might relate to their own lives.

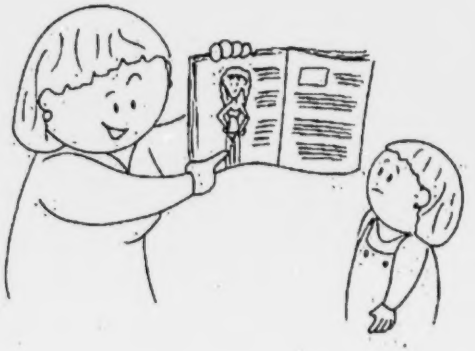
Dealing with Media Pressure

Without doubt, media messages influence the values that make up our character. The media—TV, radio, newspapers, movies, songs, video games, advertising—use powerful techniques to get our attention and to get their messages across in the most effective way. Taking charge of our use of the media requires learning to say "no" to media images and messages. It takes practice for children to learn to do this.

To help your child deal with media pressures, you should:

- Talk with your child about media pressures. Explain that the media can use subtle or clever messages about who she should be, how she should look, how she should act, what should be the focus of her life, what she should do with her time, what kind of people she should value, what she should think of adults, and so on.
- Help your child identify the different kinds of pressure he faces everyday from TV, magazines, billboards, music, movies, videos games, and more.
- Discuss the consequences of accepting or not accepting media messages (e.g., being a bone-thin female, being a muscular male, buying designer clothes).

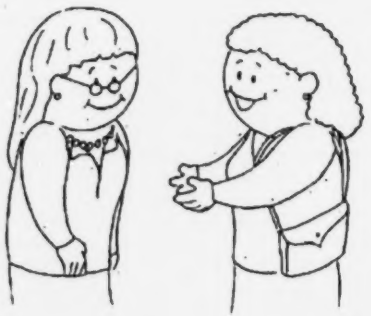
- Teach your child the two-step refusal process:
  1. Check out the message and apply the "self-esteem rule": Does it make you feel bad about yourself? Do you see people treating each other the way you would want to be treated?
  2. If the answer is yes, act quickly to avoid being influenced by doing one of the following:
     —Change the channel or station, turn the page, stop playing the game.
     —Turn off the TV, song, game, or radio, or throw away the magazine or newspaper or leave the place where the message is being presented.
     —Talk back to the message with a positive counter-message.
     —Make a joke about the message.



Working with Teachers and Schools to Build Character

Research indicates that children take values seriously only when they see that the adults they respect agree, at least in general, with those values. Although parents must be the ones to determine which values they want their children to develop, they need the help of the community, particularly the schools, in reinforcing those values. Here are some suggestions for ways that you can work with your child's teachers and other school officials to make sure that you are all "on the same page" in terms of the basic values that you want your child to learn and use:

- Visit with your child's teachers early in the school year. Tell them what kind of person you want your child to become and what values are important to you. Discuss with them ways that they and the school can reinforce the lessons you are teaching your child about good character.



- If the school has a character education program, or if character education is part of the curriculum, ask for a description of the program or curriculum and talk with teachers about how you can help reinforce the lessons at home. If the school does not have a character education program, work with the school and local community to begin one.
- Be alert for and communicate with teachers when the school is giving your child conflicting messages about values. For example, your child's teacher might stress the importance of not cheating, while her coach stresses the importance of doing whatever you have to do in order to win. Some teachers might demand that students come to class with all the materials they need for the day's work; others might let them borrow from each other or sit in class without materials. Some might set strict policies about how homework is to be done and when it must be turned in; others might have no clear policies—or assign no homework at all.
- Work with other parents and parent groups to help your child's school establish and maintain high standards for behavior both in school and at after-school events, such as ball games or concerts. Help to set up a list of volunteers for supervising school activities or chaperoning field trips to museums, libraries and other activities. In addition, you might meet with other parents to agree on standards of behavior for activities outside of school, such as parties.

Resources

Books That Can Support Character Development

The books in this section are arranged alphabetically by author. They are separated into three lists according to age group: Beginning (ages 1–6); Intermediate (ages 6–9); and Advanced (ages 9 and up). Please note that the age levels overlap and should be viewed only as rough guides—some books may appeal to younger or older children as well as those in the age group indicated.

Each entry notes the quality or qualities of character that the book illustrates. Some entries also indicate books that are available in Spanish, although all available titles may not be noted. Several books may also be available in other languages. Please check with your local librarian to find more books in a particular language.

Beginning
Ages 1-6

Andersen, Hans Christian. *The Emperor's New Clothes.* (Various editions). [Honesty]

Barbour, Karen. *Mr. Bow Tie.* San Diego: Harcourt, 1991. [Compassion]

Baylor, Byrd. *I'm in Charge of Celebrations.* Illustrated by Peter Parnall. New York: Aladdin Library, 1995. [Respect for Others]

Brisson, Pat. *The Year My Father Was Ten.* Illustrated by Andrea Shine. Honesdale, PA: Boyds Mill Press, 1998. [Honesty; Responsibility; Good Judgment]

Brott, Ardyth. *Jeremy's Decision.* Illustrated by Michael Martchenko. New York: Kane/Miller, 1996. [Self-respect; Good Judgment; Courage]

Burleigh, Bob. *Flight: The Journey of Charles Lindberg.* Illustrated by Mike Wimmer. New York: Putnam, 1997. [Courage; Self-respect; Good Judgment]

Burton, Virginia L. *Katy and the Big Snow.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1971. [Courage; Responsibility]

Catrow, David. *We the Kids: The Preamble to the Constitution of the United States.* New York: Penguin Putnam Books for Young Readers, 2002. [Citizenship]

Cheney, Lynne V. *America: A Patriotic Primer.* New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002. [Citizenship]

Demi. *The Empty Pot.* New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1996. [Honesty]

Dorros, Arthur. *Abuela.* Illustrated by Elisa Kleven. Glenview, IL: Scott Foresman, 1997. (English/Spanish) [Responsibility; Good Judgment]

Dr. Seuss. *Horton Hatches the Egg.* (Various editions.) [Responsibility; Compassion]

Family Pictures/Cuadros de Familia. Illustrated by Carmen L. Garza. Berkeley, CA: Children's Book Press, 1993. (English/Spanish) [Responsibility]

Fox, Mem. *Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge*. Illustrated by Julie Vivas. New York: Kane/Miller, 1985. [Compassion; Responsibility]

Freedman, Florence B. *Brothers: A Hebrew Legend*. New York: HarperCollins, 1985. [Responsibility; Compassion]

Gantschev, Ivan. *The Christmas Train*. Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1984. [Courage]

Griffith, Helen V. *Granddaddy's Place*. Illustrated by James Stevenson. New York: Greenwillow, 1987. [Responsibility; Respect for Others; Good Judgment]

Grimm's Fairy Tales. (Various editions.) Look for the following tales in particular:

"The Brave Little Tailor" [Courage];
"The Bremen Town Musicians" [Courage; Compassion]
"The Elves & the Shoemaker" [Compassion; Responsibility]
"The Fisherman & His Wife" [Compassion; Good Judgment]

Hazen, Barbara Shook. *Even If I Did Something Awful?* Illustrated by Nancy Kincade. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992. [Honesty]

Hendershot, Judith. *In Coal Country*. Illustrated by Thomas B. Allen. New York: Knopf, 1987. [Responsibility]

Henkes, Kevin. *Chrysanthemum*. New York: Mulberry Books, 1996. [Courage; Self-respect]

Hoberman, Mary Ann. *And to Think That We Thought That We'd Never Be Friends*. Illustrated by Kevin Hawkes. New York: Crown Books, 1999. [Respect for Others; Compassion; Good Judgment]

Hodges, Margaret. *Saint George and the Dragon*. Illustrated by Trina Schart Hyman. Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1990. [Courage; Responsibility]

The Hole in the Dike. (Various editions.) [Courage; Responsibility; Citizenship]

Jakes, John. *Susanna of the Alamo: A True Story*. San Diego: Harcourt, 1986. [Courage; Citizenship]

Kalman, Maria. *Fireboat: The Heroic Adventures of the John J. Harvey*. New York: Putnam, 2002. [Courage; Responsibility; Self-discipline]

Lee, Hector Viveros. *Yo Tenia Un Hipopótamo*. (Spanish) Glenview, IL: Scott Foresman, 1997. [Respect for Others; Compassion]

Lionni, Leo. *A Color of His Own*. New York: Dragonfly, 1997. [Self-respect; Good Judgment]

———. *Swimmy*. New York: Knopf, 1992. (Also available in Spanish.) [Courage]

Lobel, Arnold. *Frog & Toad Are Friends*. New York: HarperCollins, 1970. [Compassion; Courage; Respect for Others]

Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth. *Hiawatha*. (Various editions.) [Courage; Responsibility]

Luttrell, Ida. *Three Good Blankets.* Illustrated by Michael McDermott. New York: Macmillan Child Group, 1990. [Compassion; Respect for Others]

Martin, Bill, Jr. and Archambault, John. *Knots on a Counting Rope.* Illustrated by Ted Rand. New York: Owlet, 1997. (Also available in Spanish.) [Courage; Responsibility]

Maestro, Betsy. *Coming to America.* Illustrated by Susannah Ryan. New York: Scholastic, 1996. [Citizenship]

McKissack, Patricia C. *The Honest-to-Goodness Truth.* Illustrated by Giselle Potter. New York: Atheneum, 2000. [Honesty]

McPhail, David. *Annie & Co.* New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1991. [Respect for Others]

Miles, Miska. *Annie & the Old One.* Illustrated by Peter Parnall. Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1972. [Responsibility; Respect for Others]

Mosel, Arlene. *Tikki Tikki Tembo.* Illustrated by Blair Lent. New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1988. [Responsibility]

Munsch, Robert. *La Princesa Con Una Bolsa de Papel/Vestida/Paperbag Princess.* Illustrated by Michael Martchenko. New York: Firefly Books, 1986. (Spanish/English) [Courage; Responsibility]

Olson, Arielle N. *The Lighthouse Keeper's Daughter.* Illustrated by Elaine Wentworth. Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1987. [Courage; Responsibility; Good Judgment]

Osborne, Mary Pope. *New York's Bravest.* Illustrated by Steve Johnson and Lou Fancher. New York: Knopf, 2002. [Courage]

Paul, Ann Whitford. *All By Herself: 14 Girls Who Made a Difference.* New York: Harcourt, 1999. [Courage; Self-discipline; Responsibility]

Piper, Watty. *The Little Engine That Could.* (Various editions.) (Also available in Spanish.) [Courage; Responsibility]

Polacco, Patricia. *Chicken Sunday.* New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991. [Responsibility]

Ringgold, Faith. *Tar Beach.* New York: Crown, 1991. [Self-discipline; Respect for Others]

Rodriguez, Luis J. *La Llaman América/Is Her Name.* Illustrated by Carlos Vazquez. (Spanish/English) St. Paul, MN: Curbstone Press, 1998. [Courage; Self-discipline; Responsibility]

San Sousi, Robert D. *The Talking Eggs: A Folktale from the American South.* Illustrated by Jerry Pinkney. New York: Dial Books, 1989. [Courage; Compassion]

Schindel, John. *Who Are You?* Illustrated by James Watts. New York: Macmillan Child Group, 1991. [Responsibility; Respect for Others]

Singer, Isaac Bashevis. *Why Noah Chose the Dove.* Illustrated by Eric Carle. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1987. (Also available in Spanish.) [Responsibility]

Steig, William. *Brave Irene.* New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1986. (Also available in Spanish.) [Responsibility; Courage; Good Judgment]

Steptoe, John. *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters: An African Tale.* New York: Lothrop, 1987. [Compassion; Respect for Others]

Williams, Vera B. *Cherries & Cherry Pits.* New York: Greenwillow, 1986. [Responsibility; Compassion; Respect for Others]

Yashima, Taro. *Crow Boy.* New York: Viking, 1955. [Responsibility; Self-discipline]

Zolotow, Charlotte. *The Quarreling Book.* Illustrated by Arnold Lobel. New York: HarperCollins, 1982. [Compassion; Respect for Others]

Intermediate
Ages 6–9

Aardema, Verna. *Pedro and the Padre: A Tale from Jalisco, Mexico.* New York: Dial Books for Young Readers, 1991. (Also available in Spanish.) [Honesty]

Aesop's Fables. (Various editions.) [Responsibility; Compassion]

Andersen, Hans Christian. *Fairy Tales.* (Various editions.) [Courage; Compassion; Responsibility]

Atwater, Richard and Atwater, Florence. *Mr. Popper's Penguins.* Illustrated by Robert Lawson. Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1988. [Compassion]

Babbitt, Natalie. *Tuck Everlasting.* New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1986. [Self-respect; Responsibility]

Bennett, William J. *The Children's Book of America.* Illustrated by Michael Hague. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998. [Citizenship; Responsibility]

———. *The Children's Book of Virtues.* Illustrated by Michael Hague. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995. [Honesty; Responsibility; Compassion; Respect for Others; Self-respect; Good Judgment]

Blos, Joan W. *A Gathering of Days: A New England Girl's Journal, 1830–32.* New York: Macmillan Child Group, 1979. [Responsibility; Self-discipline]

Brink, Carol R. *Caddie Woodlawn.* Illustrated by Trina Schart Hyman. New York: Aladdin Library, 1990. [Responsibility; Respect for Others]

Bulla, Clyde Robert. *The Chalk Box Kid.* Illustrated by Thomas B. Allen. New York: Random House, 1987. [Courage; Good Judgment]

Burnett, Frances Hodgson. *The Secret Garden.* (Various editions; available in English and Spanish.) [Compassion; Courage]

Burnford, Sheila. *The Incredible Journey.* Illustrated by Carl Burger. New York: Bantam, 1990. [Self-discipline; Courage]

Castaneda, Omar S. *Abuela's Weave.* Illustrated by Enrique O. Sanchez. New York: Lee & Low Books, 1993. [Self-discipline; Courage]

Chaikin, Miriam. *Exodus.* Illustrated by Charles Mikolaycak. New York: Holiday House, 1987. [Courage; Good Judgment]

Chin, Charlie. *China's Bravest Girl: The Legend of Hua Mu Lan*. Illustrated by Tomie Arai. Berkeley, CA: Children's Book Press, 1997. (Available in English and Chinese.) [Courage; Self-discipline; Good Judgment]

Colum, Padraic (Ed.). *The Children's Homer: The Adventures of Odysseus and the Tale of Troy*. Illustrated by Willy Pagany. New York: Macmillan Child Group, 1982. [Responsibility; Respect for Others]

Cosby, Bill. *My Big Lie*. Illustrated by Varnette P. Honeywood. New York: Cartwheel Books, 1999. [Honesty; Responsibility; Good Judgment]

Cowley, Joy. *Big Moon Tortilla*. Illustrated by Dyanne Strongbow. Honesdale, PA: Boyds Mill Press, 2002. [Compassion; Self-discipline]

Crew, Gary. *Bright Star*. Illustrated by Anne Spudvilas. New York: Kane/Miller, 1997. [Courage; Self-discipline]

Dalgliesh, Alice. *The Courage of Sarah Noble*. Illustrated by Leonard Weisgard. New York: Macmillan Child Group, 1986. [Courage; Respect for Others; Good Judgment]

D'Aulaire, Ingri and D'Aulaire, Edgar P. *Book of Greek Myths*. New York: Doubleday, 1980. [Courage; Honesty; Responsibility; Self-discipline]

DeJong, Meindert. *The House of Sixty Fathers*. Illustrated by Maurice Sendak. New York: Harper Trophy, 1987. [Compassion; Courage; Responsibility]

dePaola, Tomie. *Now One Foot, Now the Other*. New York: Putnam 1991. [Responsibility; Compassion; Respect for Others]

Du Bois, William P. *The Twenty-One Balloons*. New York: Puffin, 1986. [Courage]

Estes, Eleanor. *The Hundred Dresses*. Illustrated by Louis Slobodkin. San Diego: Harcourt, 1974. [Courage; Good Judgment]

George, Jean C. *My Side of the Mountain*. Glenview, IL: Scott Foresman, 2000. [Self-discipline; Courage]

Guthrie, Woody. *This Land Is Your Land*. Illustrated by Kathy Jacobsen. Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1998. [Citizenship]

Hahn, Mary D. *Stepping on the Cracks*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1991. [Citizenship; Compassion; Courage]

Harper, Jessica. *I'm Not Going to Chase the Cat Today*. Illustrated by Lindsay Harper DuPont. New York: HarperCollins, 2000. [Compassion; Respect for Others; Good Judgment]

Henry, Marguerite. *Misty of Chincoteague*. Illustrated by Wesley Dennis. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1990. [Respect for Others; Courage]

Hoffman, Mary. *Amazing Grace*. Illustrated by Caroline Binch. Glenview, IL: Scott Foresman, 1991. [Self-discipline; Courage]

Lamb, Charles and Lamb, Mary. *Tales from Shakespeare*. (Various editions.) [Compassion; Courage; Citizenship]

Lewis, C. S. *The Chronicles of Narnia series*. (Various editions.) [Respect for Others; Courage; Self-discipline]

Loewen, Nancy. *We Live Here Too! Kids Talk about Good Citizenship*. Illustrated by Brandon Reibeling. New York: Picture Window Books, 2002. [Citizenship]

Lowry, Lois. *Number the Stars*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1989. [Courage; Self-discipline]

Luenn, Nancy. *Nessa's Fish*. New York: Atheneum, 1990. [Compassion; Courage]

MacDonald, George. *The Princess and the Goblin*. (Various editions.) [Compassion; Courage]

MacLachlan, Patricia. *Sarah, Plain and Tall*. New York: HarperCollins, 1985. [Courage; Respect for Others; Honesty; Self-discipline; Good Judgment]

Maestro, Betsy and Maestro, Giulio. *A More Perfect Union: The Story of Our Constitution*. New York: Morrow, 1990. [Citizenship]

Matsuno, M. *A Pair of Red Clogs*. New York: The World Publishing Co., 1960. [Honesty; Courage; Self-discipline; Good Judgment]

Moore, Eva. Buddy: *The First Seeing Eye Dog*. Illustrated by Don Bolognese. New York: Scholastic, 1996. [Courage; Self-discipline]

Myers, Walter D. *Now Is Your Time!* The African-American Struggle for Freedom. New York: HarperCollins, 1991. [Courage]

Paek, Min. *Aekyung's Dream*. Berkeley, CA: Children's Book Press, 1988. [Courage; Self-discipline]

Rawls, Wilson. *Where the Red Fern Grows*. New York: Random House, 1984. [Courage; Responsibility]

Ryan, Pam M. *The Flag We Love*. Illustrated by Ralph Masiello. Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge Publishing, 2000. [Citizenship]

Say, Allen. *El Chino*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1990. [Courage; Self-discipline]

Sewall, Marcia. *The Pilgrims of Plymouth*. New York: Aladdin Library, 1996. [Courage; Citizenship; Compassion; Respect for Others]

Shamat, Marjorie W. *A Big Fat Enormous Lie*. Illustrated by David M. McPhail. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1993. [Honesty; Responsibility; Good Judgment]

Silverstein, Shel. *The Giving Tree*. New York: HarperCollins, 1987. (Also available in Spanish.) [Compassion]

Stuart, Jesse. *A Penny's Worth of Character*. Ashland, KY: Jesse Stuart Foundation, 1988. [Honesty; Courage]

Tales of the Arabian Nights. (Various editions.) [Courage; Respect for Others; Self-discipline]

Talley, Linda. *Plato's Journey*. Illustrated by Itoko Maeno. New York: Marsh Media, 1998. [Honesty]

White, E. B. *Charlotte's Web*. Illustrated by Garth Williams. (Various editions.) [Compassion; Responsibility; Respect for Others]

Wilder, Laura Ingalls. *Little House series*. Illustrated by Garth Williams. (Various editions.) [Responsibility; Courage; Honesty]

Advanced
Ages 9 and up

Acierno, Maria Armengol. *Children of Flight Pedro Pan*. New York, Silver Moon Press, 1994. (Spanish/English) [Courage; Responsibility; Self-discipline]

Alcott, Louisa May. *Little Women*. (Various editions.) [Responsibility; Self-discipline]

Arnold, Caroline. *Children of the Settlement Houses*. Minneapolis, MN: Carolrhoda Books, 1998. [Compassion; Courage; Self-discipline]

Avi. *Nothing but the Truth*. New York: Orchard Books, 1991. [Self-discipline; Responsibility; Citizenship]

Bauer, Marion D. *On My Honor*. New York: Yearling Books, 1987. [Responsibility; Honesty; Good Judgment]

Brooks, Bruce. *The Moves Make the Man*. New York: Harper Trophy, 1996. [Honesty; Courage; Responsibility; Good Judgment]

Butterworth, William. *Leroy and the Old Man*. New York: Scholastic, 1995. [Respect for Others; Self-respect]

Castilla, Julia Mercedes. *Emilio*. Houston, TX: Arte Publico Press, 1999. (Available in English and Spanish.) [Courage; Responsibility; Self-discipline]

Choldenko, Gennifer. *Notes from a Liar and Her Dog*. New York: Putnam, 2001. [Honesty; Good Judgment]

Clifton, Lucille. *The Boy Who Didn't Believe in Spring*. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1992. (Also available in Spanish.) [Courage; Responsibility; Self-discipline]

The Constitution of the United States of America. (Various editions.) [Citizenship]

Cousins, Margaret. *The Story of Thomas Alva Edison*. New York: Random House, 1997. [Courage; Self-discipline; Responsibility]

Defoe, Daniel. *Robinson Crusoe*. (Various editions.) [Self-discipline]

de Saint-Exupery, Antoine. *The Little Prince*. (Various editions.) [Self-discipline; Responsibility]

Dickens, Charles. *David Copperfield*. (Various editions.) [Compassion; Self-discipline]

Dodge, Mary M. *Hans Brinker, or the Silver Skates*. (Various editions.) [Courage; Self-discipline; Honesty; Good Judgment]

Fitzpatrick, Marie-Louise. *Long March: The Choctaw's Gift to Irish Famine Relief*. Tricycle Press, 2001. [Compassion; Courage]

Fox, Paula. *One-Eyed Cat*. New York: Aladdin Library, 2000. [Responsibility; Honesty]

Frank, Anne. *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl*. (Various editions.) [Courage; Compassion; Responsibility]

Franklin, Benjamin. *Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin.* (Various editions.) [Self-discipline; Responsibility]

Hamilton, Virginia. *The House of Dies Drear.* Illustrated by Eros Keith. New York: Macmillan Child Group, 1984. [Courage; Compassion]

Henry, O. *Stories.* (Various editions.) [Compassion; Responsibility; Self-discipline]

Herrera, Juan Felipe. *Laughing Out Loud, I Fly: A Carcajadas Yo Vuelo* (poetry). Illustrated by Karen Barbour. New York: HarperCollins, 1998. (Spanish/English) [Courage; Respect for Others; Responsibility]

Heyerdahl, Thor. *Kon-Tiki.* (Various editions.) [Courage; Self-discipline]

Highwater, Jamake. *Anpao: An American Indian Odyssey.* Illustrated by Fritz Scholder. New York: HarperCollins, 1992. [Courage; Responsibility; Self-discipline]

Ho, Minfong. *The Clay Marble.* New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1991. [Compassion; Courage; Responsibility]

Hurwitz, Johanne. *Hot and Cold Winter.* New York: William Morrow & Co., 1988. [Honesty; Responsibility]

Keller, Helen. *Story of My Life.* (Various editions.) [Courage; Self-discipline]

Kipling, Rudyard. *Captains Courageous.* New York: Classic Books, 2000. [Courage; Responsibility; Self-discipline]

Lincoln, Abraham. *The Gettysburg Address.* (Various editions.) [Courage; Citizenship; Responsibility]

Lord, Bette Bao. *In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson.* Illustrated by Marc Simont. New York: Harper Trophy, 1986. [Courage; Self-discipline]

Milton, Joyce. *Marching to Freedom: The Story of Martin Luther King Jr.* New York, Yearling Books, 1987. [Courage; Citizenship; Self-discipline; Responsibility]

Naylor, Phyllis Reynolds. *Eddie, Incorporated.* Illustrated by Blanche Sims. New York: Atheneum, 1980. [Self-discipline]

New York Times Staff. *The New York Times: A Nation Challenged, Young Reader's Edition.* New York: Scholastic, 2002. [Courage; Self-discipline; Responsibility]

O'Dell, Scott. *Sing Down the Moon.* New York: Laurel Leaf, 1999. [Courage; Self-discipline]

Orczy, Emmuska. *The Scarlet Pimpernel.* (Various editions.) [Responsibility; Courage; Self-discipline]

Paterson, Katherine. *Bridge to Terabithia.* Illustrated by Donna Diamond. New York: Harper Trophy, 1987. [Courage; Self-discipline; Responsibility]

Paulsen, Gary. *Hatchet.* New York: Pocket Books, 1999. [Courage; Self-discipline; Responsibility]

Soto, Gary. *The Skirt*. Illustrated by Eric Velesquez. New York: Yearling Books, 1994. (Also available in Spanish.) [Honesty; Responsibility; Respect for Others; Good Judgment]

Speare, Elizabeth G. *The Witch of Blackbird Pond*. New York: Dell, 1972. [Respect for Others; Compassion; Self-discipline]

Steele, Christy, Bunkers, Suzanne L. and Graves, Kerry (Eds.). *A Free Black Girl before the Civil War: The Diary of Charlotte Forten, 1854*. Mankato, MN: Blue Earth Books, 1999. [Courage; Responsibility]

Taylor, Mildred D. *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*. (Various editions; also available in Spanish.) [Courage; Responsibility; Self-discipline]

Thimmesh, Catherine. *Girls Think of Everything: Stories of Ingenious Inventions by Women*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2000. [Self-discipline; Responsibility]

Twain, Mark. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. (Various editions.) [Self-discipline; Responsibility; Compassion]

Uchida, Yoshika. *Journey to Topaz*. Illustrated by Donald Carrick. Glenview, IL: Scott Foresman, 1988. [Courage; Self-discipline]

White, E. B. *The Trumpet of the Swan*. (Various editions.) [Compassion]

Children's Magazines

Click
1-800-821-0115
(www.cricketmag.com/Category.asp?catid=2)
Contains articles and stories with a focus on science, social studies, nature and art themes. (Ages 3–7)

Cobblestone
1-800-821-0115
(www.cobblestonepub.com)
Contains articles and stories that focus on American history. (Ages 9–14)

Highlights for Children
1-800-603-0591
(www.highlights.com)
Includes stories, poems, craft ideas, cartoons and a regular guide for parents and teachers. (Ages 4–10)

Ladybug
1-800-821-0115
(www.cricketmag.com/Category.asp?catid=2)
Presents stories, poems and articles for younger children. Includes a parent's supplement; also see "Parent's Corner" on the Web site. (Ages 2–6)

Muse
1-800-821-0115
(www.cricketmag.com/category_home.asp?id=4)
Articles and columns spark curiosity about science, history and the arts. (Ages 9-14)

National Geographic Kids
1–800–647–5463
(www.nationalgeographic.com/ngkids/)
Offers articles on a variety of science, social studies and popular arts subjects. Issues include learning games, projects and posters. A parents' guide is available. (Ages 8–13)

Spider
1–800–821–0115
(www.cricketmag.com/category_home.asp?id=3)
Features works by well-known authors and artists. (Ages 6–9).

Booklists

American Library Association. *Notable Children's Books.*
(www.ala.org/alsc/awards.html#notable)
Yearly lists provide brief descriptions of books recommended by a committee of the American Library Association.

Hearne, Betsy and Stevenson, Deborah. *Choosing Books for Children: A Commonsense Guide* (3rd ed.). Champaign-Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999.
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Arranges hundreds of books into six sections based on reading level: Wordless, Picture, Story, Early Reading, Middle Reading and Young Adult. Subject indexes include such topics as Family Life, Friendship, Growing Up, History, Immigrants, Manners, Minorities, Problems, Religion, and War and Peace.

National Endowment for the Humanities. *Timeless Classics.*
Available from the Consumer Information Center, Pueblo, Colorado.
(1–888–878–3256; www.pueblo.gsa.gov/)
Lists nearly 400 children's books that were published before 1960.

Trelease, Jim. *The New Read-Aloud Handbook* (5th ed.). New York: Penguin, 2001.
Along with lists of hundreds of titles of books appropriate for various age groups, this book provides information about the importance of reading aloud with children and suggestions for making reading aloud most effective.

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No Child Left Behind

On January 8, 2002, President George W. Bush signed into law the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB). This new law represents his education reform plan and contains the most sweeping changes to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act since it was enacted in 1965. It changes the federal role in education by asking America's schools to describe their success in terms of what each student accomplishes. The act contains the president's four basic education reform principles:

- Stronger accountability for results;
- Local control and flexibility;
- Expanded options for parents; and
- An emphasis on effective and proven teaching methods.

In sum, this law—in partnership with parents, communities, school leadership and classroom teachers—will ensure that every child in America receives a great education and that no child is left behind.

For more information on *No Child Left Behind*, visit the website at www.nochildleftbehind.gov or call 1-800-USA-LEARN.

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